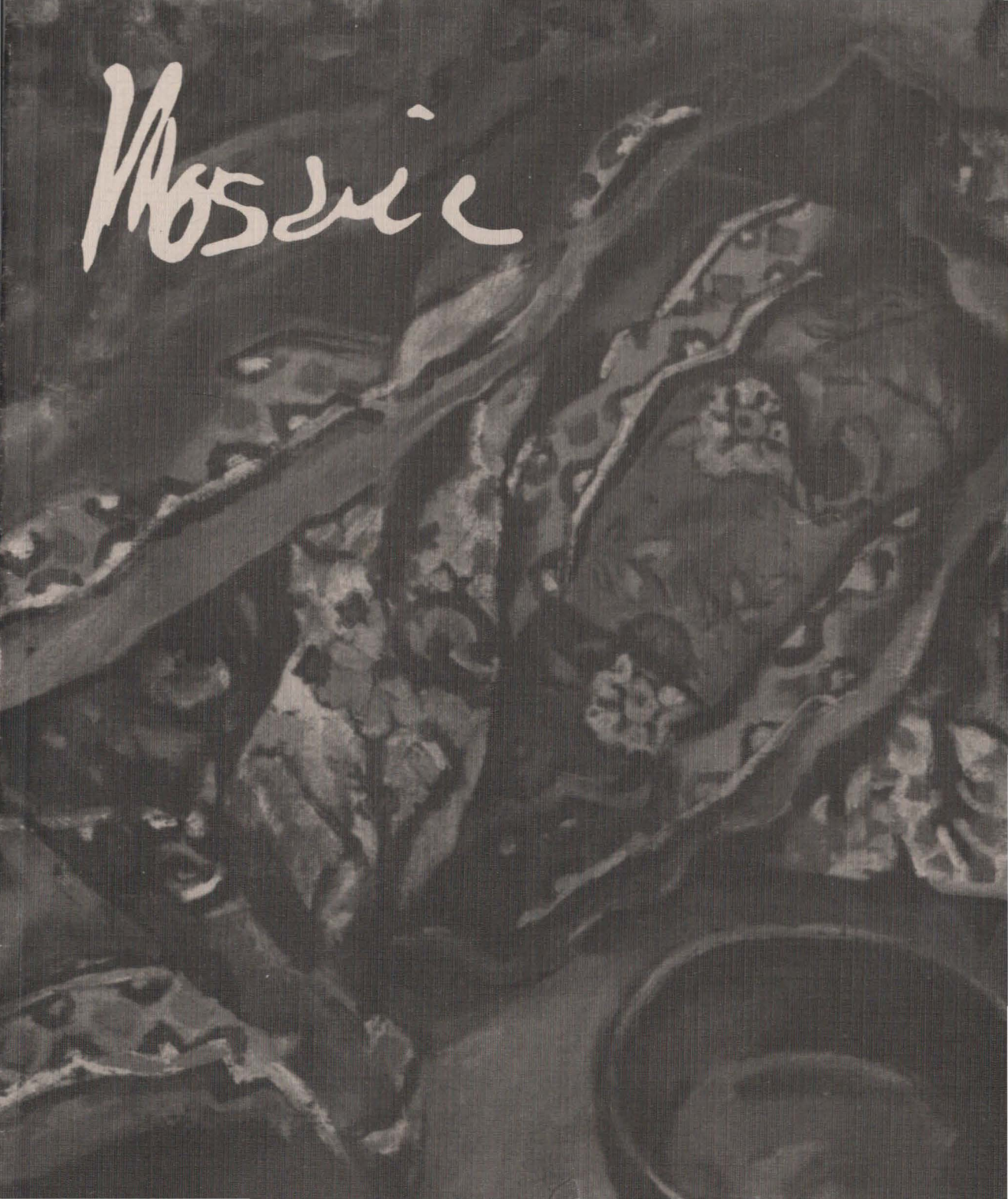
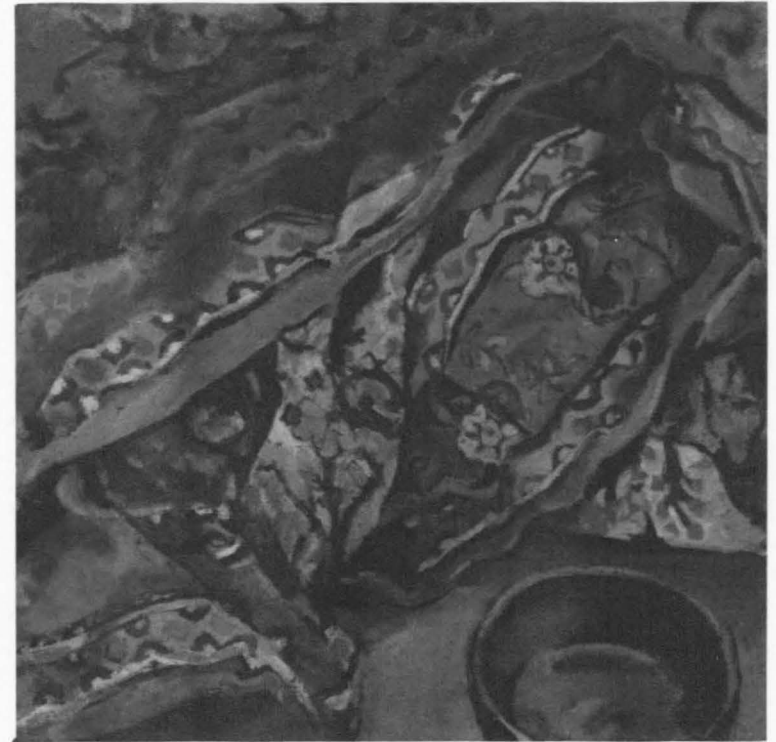


Mosque



Mossie



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For Karen
thanks

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Due to reproduction problems, we regret that Elsie Sanchez's oil painting "Point of View" is not reproduced in the magazine. Elsie is the winner of the 1990-1991 *Mosaic* Art Show.

In my past four years with *Mosaic*, I've seen many changes in the magazine, and this 1990-91 issue is no exception. First, and probably most important, is the fact that more people than ever are reading *Mosaic* this year, thanks in part to support from a wide variety of sources at The Ohio State University.

The boost in circulation can be directly related to the initiation of the "Friends of *Mosaic*" campaign. "Friends of *Mosaic*" enables students, faculty, and organizations to donate money to specifically help *Mosaic*. Especially this first year, their support has been critical, and means much more to us than just a monetary donation (please see p. 80 for a complete list of Donors and Patrons).

In addition, critical funding has come from Taylor Tower, Residence Halls Advisory Council (RHAC), and Student Organizations Services. Their support of *Mosaic* has indicated their commitment to the arts and the constituencies they serve—Taylor Tower, the Residence Hall system, and the student body.

Finally, and most importantly, *Mosaic* recognizes the contributions of the entire University Honors Center, and specifically, their support through the Sidney Pressey Endowment Fund. Their contributions are numerous and priceless, and extend from Dr. Hothersall to the entire Honors House staff.

This year also marks a departure for *Mosaic* as we change our position as strictly a publisher to a more general position as an advocate of the arts on campus. This year has included another undergraduate art show, as well as an unprecedented number of readings co-sponsored with the Wexner Center Student Association and Student Events Committee. The continuing support of our faculty board, including Lee Abbott, Roger Blackwell, David Citino, Kathy Fagan, and Michelle Herman, underlines the spirit that the arts are well and alive on campus. We hope all students of the university will have many opportunities to participate and enjoy the arts in the future.

While many things have changed over the last four years, the dedication of the staff to publish a quality magazine has remained constant. This year, the editors have expended literally hundreds of volunteer hours to produce what we hope is the best *Mosaic* ever. Over these last four years, both the editorial staff and myself have enjoyed and benefited from the advisorship of Karen Card. Although this is her last year as advisor, she has provided critical support during her term. Last year's winner of the university's Outstanding Student Advisor Award, she is as much a friend as she is a motivator, and she will be missed.

As I represent the entire staff, we hope you will enjoy this issue of *Mosaic*, by far the most comprehensive, diverse, and published issue ever. We hope you will share our enthusiasm for the artistic achievements of the contributors of this issue, and for the future challenges and opportunities for *Mosaic*.

David Kolner
Editor



Untitled

Oil on canvas
24" x 36"

Snow

Munching on some tragic peach,
I grow fatter, as though
its heat must store itself
for chilled winter days
when I don't wear a coat.
I don't get cold anymore—only the days
before my womb wrenches itself into a frenzy,
trying to spill its wretched contents
into the snow.
The icy stain, I'm told, is hereditary: just
have to know your body, my mother declares
and I wonder: is it a jab
about my eternally escalating weight, and
how does she remember that sullen chill,
as her body no longer twists with our feminine burden.
Long ago I lay beneath my lover and shivered
while the curve of my new belly rose up to meet him.
It was one of those white moments, when virgin snowflakes
dance on your tongue, then dissolve
in a communion of purity. My skin pressed
smooth into his, and though she wasn't more
than a few inches and ounces, he felt our daughter
swim into his world. We knit
our warm cocoon, waiting
for her face to surprise us, so intimately
like ourselves, yet so her own, our March crocus,
bursting through the snow.
But she never bloomed, and when winter melted away,
they pulled her blue body from mine,
and cut the cord that had wrapped around her neck.
My lover watched, inconsolable, lighting cigarette
after cigarette, perhaps to warm his frozen hands.
We were too young, I tell myself, and in
summer's stench we tore each other to shreds,
and threw our love into the incinerator, so it
could pollute the August sky. The fire
still smolders inside me, I eat
to keep it fueled.

First place, 1991 Albert J. Kuhn Award for Excellence in Poetry



Still Life

Oil on canvas
16" x 24"



Lorry Edwards

Oil pastel
18" x 24"

Mother

He has settled on the island where cool winds blow in January. Something draws them all here: the screeching cry of the gull, the lull of the rippling sea. Three hours on the motorcycle from Miami, and there is no place to go, except backwards. And he is certain there is no such thing as reverse on his Kawasaki.

Every night he returns to his tent on the gravel campsite. "TEN DOLLARS A DAY!" screams the billboard as he chains the bike to a metal rack. The fabric hut has become his secret home: no phone, no television, no refrigerator. Though he has stuffed several blankets under his sleeping bag, the pebbles and rocks still dig into his back. He floats away, smoking a joint, remembering a fairy tale about a princess and a pea.

Ah, the princess. He is here to forget the princess, who at this moment must be tending the roses in her precious garden. Her golden curls are always held back with a satin ribbon—he would like to release the knot and watch them fly in the island wind. But that, he remembers, is not why he is here. His ties to the princess have been severed, though she doesn't realize it yet. Soon, he thinks, soon she will understand.

But will I? he muses, twisting the cap from a warm beer hidden in a corner of the tent. The frothy liquid bathes his throat in despair, but he drains the bottle anyway.

Voices outside the tent startle him. The peace he expected among the Conchs has disguised itself. He hears the flaps of the next tent being unzipped, hears the sultry whispers of his neighbors as they initiate their nightly ritual. He sighs, remembering and wanting to forget. He cannot leave the tent, he realizes, without compromising their secret passion. So he waits, hearing them rise and fall, slipping into their joy.

In the morning he goes to find Mother. Mother is on the west side of the island, head buried under the hood of a '67 Cadillac. He stares at Mother's body: tanned, hairy legs, tight ass encased in denim shorts. Mother's hair flies loose over his shoulders: black and shiny.

"Worth a fortune," Mother mutters and whirls to face him. Mother's eyes are tilted slightly. Even with the wrench in his hand he looks like an island god. "You want to buy it?"

"No," he gulps, the word sticking in his throat. A great gust of wind blows in from the sky, and the two of them watch the palm trees sway. He notices the island cats, three of them huddled nonchalantly around Mother's ankles. "Why are you called Mother, anyway?"

Mother stares at him then, cool and hard. The black eyes are like glass. Mother's lips have curled into a smirk. "I am the mother of the island," he lolls, mocking a Caribbean voice. He tips an imaginary hat. "And who might you be, little bird?"

"Benja-Ben. Ben," he decides, stick-

ing out his hand. Mother ignores it and brushes a flyaway hair from Ben's forehead.

"Ah, Mr. Benny Ben." The island voice has been replaced by Mother's native Brooklyn accent. "So you've come the find Mother, eh?"

Ben nods, like so many before him. His arms fall limply to his sides, he shifts his eyes to the ground. He can feel Mother staring at him. "How much?" he asks finally.

"Eighty," replies Mother, reverting to his island cadence. They climb into the Cadillac. Mother cruises the island, singing along with an imaginary radio, waving to everyone he passes. Ben is silent in the passenger seat, still unsure of his place in this daily routine. The island winds are sleeping now, hibernating somewhere above the indigo ocean.

The giant automobile rolls to a stop before a gingerbread house. Ben pulls the twenties from his wallet and Mother disappears into the pink building. He returns with his hair tied into a ponytail with a bit of string, hands the bag to Ben and grins. "Wings for the little bird to soar above the island." Mother places one bold finger on Ben's bare knee; Ben glances at it and gazes into Mother's eyes before dashing from the car.

Though the January sun is merciful, he finds himself sweating as he reaches the campsite. His chest heaves with both effort and fear—not of Mother or the potential trouble waiting in his eighty dollar ziplock bag. He is scared, he knows, of and for himself.

Safe inside his tent, he removes his clothing and runs his hands over his entire body. One beer remains and he breaks its seal. Breathing normally, he pulls the tiny packet of papers from beneath his backpack and rolls a joint. He inhales deeply, treasuring the golden sweet aroma. The scent reminds him of the princess. Somehow she has hidden herself inside one of his bags; she is as real inside the tent as if she had ridden along on the back of his motorcycle. She is floating in and out, carried by the hazy smoke and the island winds.

He stands in the tent, still naked, head brushing against the canvas ceiling. The princess is at his feet now, hovering like one of Mother's cats. He can see through her to the sandy ground. Bits of broken glass are mingled there among the rocks, tearing into her translucent skin, but she does not bleed.

He dresses again and gathers coins for the pay phone. He deposits the dimes, fingertips trembling. Her voice is rich with joy at the sounds of his voice—so happy that instantly he abandons his plan to tell her the truth. Her laughter ripples like the wind upon the sea.

"I'll be there soon," she informs him. "Meet my plane, day after tomorrow."

She is lovely as ever: her golden curls have been cropped short. They mount the bike and she clings to his waist.

They pass the pink house and a sad smile creeps to his lips. For a moment, he is filled with longing, yearning for

Mother's love. The Kawasaki stops in front of a tiny motel. They will sleep here for the week; no peas for this pampered princess.

They make love on the rickety bed while the radio blares in the background. His mind is not in the room: the love-making is senseless, really, but he says nothing, knowing his weary shoulders are singing a truth of their own.

He pays another visit to Mother while she is out exploring the island. This time he does not resist Mother's hand on his knee. He savors Mother's tongue in his mouth, lets his body give and receive the tinny pleasure as a cheap phonograph spins the same song, over and over. Ashamed and fulfilled, he creeps back to the room he shares with the princess and drinks the slumber like the summer's first wine. The sun begins to sink into the gulf, and the island winds grow cooler.

While he sleeps, the princess discovers Mallory Square, tugged by some irresistible force that draws so many to the island. The sky swims from pink to amber before drowning in swirls of blackness, the same blackness that controls Ben's island dreams. It is just at that instant, the tiny second before the lights are extinguished, when the princess sees the man, watching her.

Perhaps it is his darkness that draws her from her light. She slides into the car beside him, feeling the warm, worn ruby leather stroke her bare thighs. The windows are open; she feels the wind

ruffle her curls. She wishes for a moment her hair was long again; she would undo the ribbon for this magic man with the glistening black eyes. She would love to be close enough to see her hair spilling over his shoulders, tangling with his own: black and blonde melting into one.

Across the island, Ben's thoughts swirl into an angry nightmare. Peaceful features conceal his pain. The evening winds protect him, whispering a gentle lullaby, protecting his slumber.

"Ssssshhhhh," Mother croons as he carries the princess to a porch swing. Someone in the house is playing the cello, and she feels its melody creeping first up her arms, then plummeting into her very soul, crashing at last in the center of her existence. He kisses her again and again, the trio of cats perched on the railing, watching through opaque eyes. "Mother's so happy," he purrs, slipping her dress from her shoulders. The princess allows this: she is mesmerized by this man, the essence of the island. He beckons to the sky and the cool island winds rush in to caress her breasts. Mother does not touch the princess, knowing the breeze will be seduction enough.

There is no coaxing—she follows him wordlessly to his little room—the same room Ben remembers in his dreams. They tumble onto the tiny bed, murmuring words understood to only the two of them. Their lovemaking is so natural, so gradual she does not realize it is hap-

pening. Mother's body turns to glass inside her melting softness.

Ben awakens when the winds blow ice across his face. For a moment he is lost, having grown used to his rocky bed at the campsite. Then he remembers the afternoon, remembers the princess. He wants nothing more than to fly across the island and tiptoe up the back stairs, enter the mysterious room and slip into Mother's body. He knows he is one of many for Mother, but that does not dispel his need.

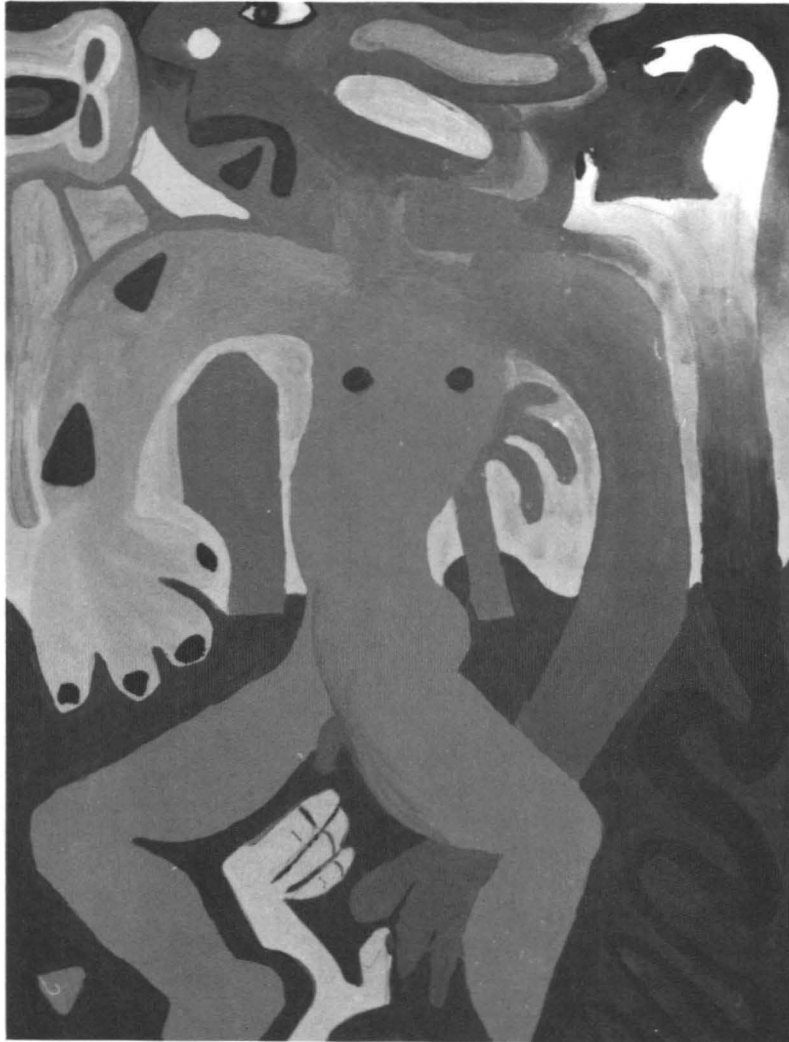
Another joint is rolled and lit, and he waits for the princess. He imagines her floating in the window. Cleansed, he tells her why he has fled to Key West, revealing the truth even to himself. She smiles: an eerie closed-mouth grin, then floats out the window. He moves to the open doorway, only to stop: the princess is sliding from Mother's car, buttoning her dress. This, he realizes, isn't part of a bad dream, or a fairy tale.

The princess sees Ben then, and one tiny hand flies to her mouth. Tears form in his cerulean eyes as he watches her running, away from the car, away from the motel, into the island night. Mother is behind him now, strong tight arms wrapped around his shoulders, restraining him, although they both know he would not follow the princess anyway.

"Let her go," Mother soothes him in his lilting island voice. "She is not meant for the island." Ben says nothing. He watches the princess grow smaller and smaller, fading into a pinpoint before

falling into the black and dangerous sea. He closes his eyes, and the winds rush in to engulf his body in the cool island darkness.

*First place, 1990-1991 Albert J. Kuhn Award
for Excellence in Short Fiction*



Untitled

Oil pastel
20" x 32"

What's Inside Me

I dreamt a Man, wild-eyed with lunacy,
with hair long and curly, tousled with briars and Nature.
His body's skin is browned from the sun,
and the soles of his bare feet are leatherworn with callouses.
He walks on thorns along paths known only to creatures of the forests.

He has a twisted smile of yellowed, broken teeth—
I barely see it through his gigantic beard.
It is a crazed grimace,
but it denotes an enlightened insanity.
His gleaming eyes, though, betray his true character.

Those eyes show him to be wild and free, passionate and unrestrained,
and they are fixed firmly ahead of him.
They peer over a pile of lifeless bodies,
and he is carried atop it by tree-trunk legs.
He steps on men who have not lived, men who fear him.

He is dignified in his baseness.
He is Pan, Iron John, Zeus.
He is the King of kings, the Giver of Life.
And he awakens that in me which is golden.



All American Girl

Photograph
9" x 12"

The Good Life

I. What is so subtly insidious
about suburbia? As when its scent
in the haunted autumn
first fills your lungs
with the vague aroma
of wet wood and damp winds;
then gags you with the odour
of charred briquettes fuming
from summer's extinguished grills.
Friends and neighbors
with faces once flushed
now drain of all passion
until a phantasmal pallor
is all that remains.
Shaking your hand,
they constrict your circulation
with long, fleshless fingers—
the knuckles just knotted bone—
then rip you into arms of ivy
draping the wax-paper windows
of brick churches and schools.
In zombie monotones
they recite from cue cards
prayers to a false Bacchus
whose leaf is the greenback;
their novocain slurs
read like a vacancy sign
on a Motel 6 of the mind,
occupied by an uninvited guest
who whispers the germinal words
of the Gideon bible
into open, obedient ears.
Soon the words crawl like lice
inside their skulls, then hatch

from the cranial shells
 and ooze out the glued corners
 of their test pattern eyes.
 In vain you stab
 with a white picket fence post
 at where their hearts should be,
 but it is not until
 the bloodshot sun radiates
 its awful judgment that they
 vaporise into howling streaks
 as in a portrait
 of Pope Innocent the Xth.

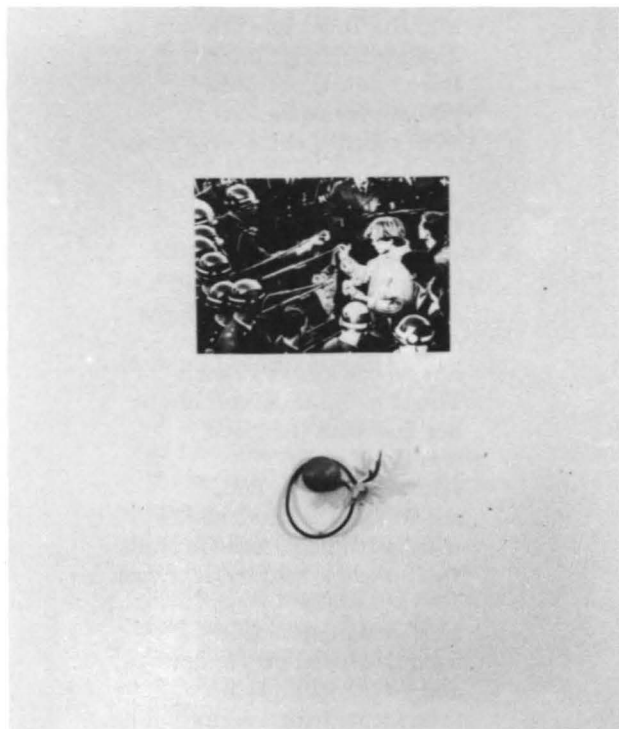
II. John Dough returns home
 after a busy day at the Office
 of Avaricious Affairs;
 as he walks through the door,
 the tongues of his house slippers
 leap up to lick his crotch
 like an affectionate puppy.
 He sits down in the living room
 behind the wheel of his new BMW
 and riffles through a stack
 of documents printed
 in a highly inflected dialect
 indigenous to one
 of Pluto's satellites.

Upstairs, his pubescent sons
 improvise beer bombs
 from Grandma's enema bags
 to the strangulated tempo
 of Krib Dëth Plays Kärnegie Hüll.
 Their genitals develop
 into Polypheman behemoths,

the cyclop eyes spurting oil
 into the Toilet Bowl Ocean.
 Their phalli then burst
 from internal pressure
 and are transplanted
 with poached rhinoceros horns.

With the voice of a siren,
 the family's pet infant
 yelps pitifully in French
 that it has been molested
 at the government-regulated
 day care centre,
 but no one knows French.
 The teen-age daughter daubs
 her face with the blood
 and fat of a calf.
 Like a dead baby doll,
 she flutters her fake lashes,
 while with Lee Press-On Nails
 she castrates the boy next door.

Mrs. Dough spies this
 from television-lit windows
 and swells with pride
 then bloats with a cream filling.
 She stacks her bric-à-brac
 as a barricade against reality:
 a great wall of china teacups
 designated for special occasions
 which never quite arise.
 Airtight plastic sheets
 protect furniture with the prices
 still attached, and she herself
 is preserved in a zip-loc bag,
 a tag on her toe.

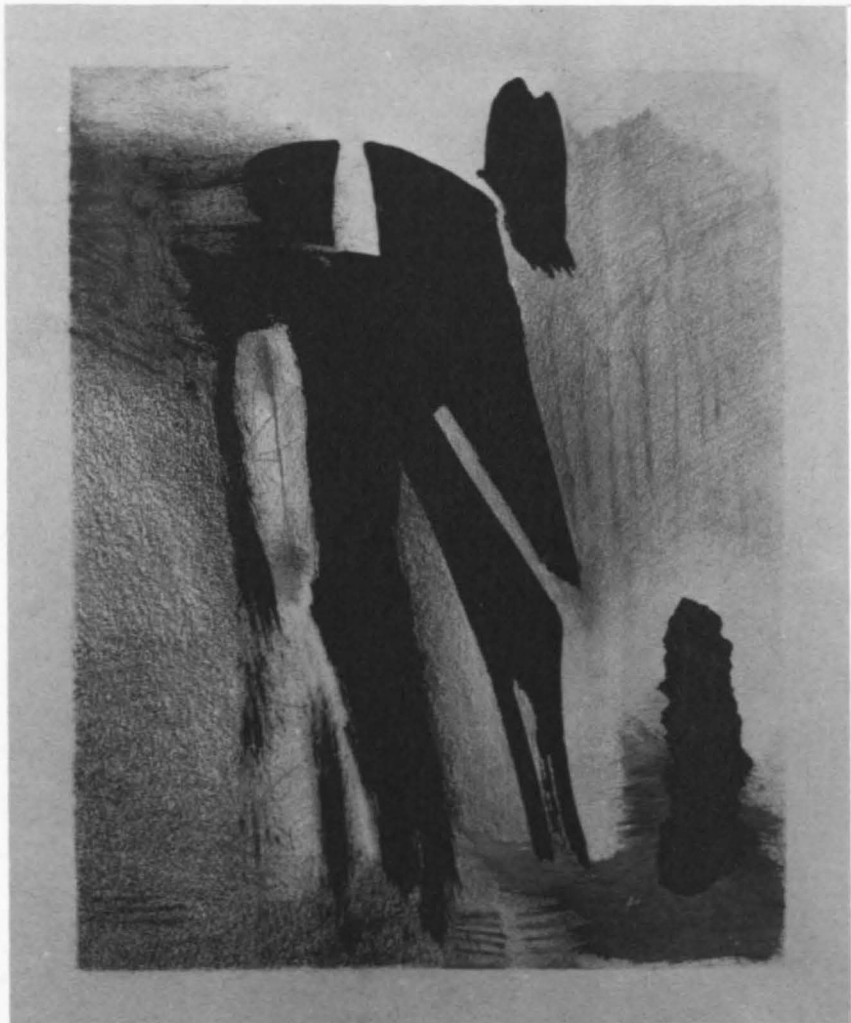


Untitled

Mixed media on masonite
36" x 24"

Avalanche

Those cracks in the walls
of that sunshine room
bulged with secrets. I ran
away, but they smiled
for my return. They
remembered the A-line dress
Grandma made me—the
yellow one with a big red
apple on the pocket. They
reminded me of foolish
choices. They sucked every
tear from my pink eyes. So
I left. I had to leave and
never go back.
Because those cracks peeled
the paint off the walls.
And I couldn't be there
when those walls
caved in.



Untitled

Ink and graphite drawing
8 1/2" x 11"

**Hueston Woods
(or: Robin follows Mark
& pops him in the head)**

Rule #1
when having
someone follow you
don't
go through
a yellow light

Rule #2
if the person
following you
is no longer
behind you
STOP—
wait until
they find you
(or at least
ten minutes)

Rule #3
understand
that three women
in a car
will always
stop and ask
for directions



Untitled

Photograph
5" x 8"

Third place, 1991 Mosaic Art Show

jujube

I like to wear these shoes.
They make my feet look like little meatloafs,
which is what they really are,
so why should they pretend to be anything else?
My legs are the color of sucked pretzels.
No one can deny that.
Yet, I am liquid mud and can sing to wax beans
through the hole in my throat.

two fingers snip at invisible paper
two lips explain the pattern—
There's no such thing as a circle
and I'm the god who's dying.

My soup has gone cold
letters wilted into a clump.
big fat carrot squares
full as sponges
crowd my bowl.
I lift another layer of skin
from my back and fold it neatly
next to my napkin.

I remember the last time I counted you in...
the icicle masquerade—
faces dripping into the punch.
bears black in sleep,
their fattened tongues dead
and limp.
Like bloated flies I drop you

since I'm the one who can't swim.
and everything's heavy
when I drown.

Change

I pull out the old shirt.
Fitting well now, my shoulders
grown to size, I fasten

each loose threaded button.
No fibers obscure the warp
of a cuff well worn.

The forest has faded
to chartreuse, but the pheasants
and spaniels stay frozen

forever in flight,
forever poised
waiting to bark.

The dogs, softer now,
chase birds with weakened wings.
They scatter dully from once vibrant

purple roosts. And in the back,
when it ripped, I sewed it up.
It's a comfortable shirt,

a flannel vortex,
that spins me back
seven cold years

to a time among
steel-lined corridors
and cool green slate.

To an alcohol that stopped
the shakes. No longer
needing its buffer

I fell away finding
my feet could hold the weight.
Now this shirt, crippled

with age, phosphorous clean
and ironed sharp hangs
in the closet. Left to itself.

Why did we grow apart?



Self portrait #1

Acrylic on canvas
18" x 24"



Thor the Humanist

Pen and ink
8 1/2" x 11"x

Love Affair

Three sprays of cologne
wasted
on a lover
that's never there
no one
ever getting close enough
to notice
its subtle, inviting smell

sitting on park bench
no hand
intertwined with mine
no autumn backdrop
"when 2 r in love..."
only the wind
blows in my ear

plenty of time
for prayer each night
no physical expression
of love waiting
to be buried beneath
the blankets
sweat and screams
saved for less
romantic pursuits



Untitled

Oil on canvas
18" x 30"

I Wish I Were Patsy Cline

usually its not this depressing but for some reason here now
it is and that is all that matters here now alone in my
kitchen with the happy music from the stereo in the living
room drifting in to cheer me up
i see acid house smiley face on the dishtowels but i couldnt
make one for him or me even if i tried if i clenched my jaws
and forced my lips wide apart it would look like pain or an
animal about to attack but not a smile this all hurts too
much for a smile has left me

i started this all out right i had the proper mindset and i
was in control of the situation and my emotions i didnt want
to hurt own possess him or anyone else and he just walked
out of my life and i know hell never come back sure ill see
him and touch him actually hes upstairs right now maybe ill
even see him twice as much as before yesterday but i just
bared my soul to him and he didnt understand a word i said

i wrote him a note this afternoon and when i wrote it i
wasnt feeling well id had a long day the sky was too bright
and it hurt my eyes he seemed strange he was talking about
new things and i was kind of confused by his new vocabulary
im still not even used to his new haircut and his eyes even
looked greener and fresher than usual

as we change we change i love watching him its beautiful i
feel like im watching a child of my own grow through the
years as i spend days with him i love him and i watch and
listen amazed he is so powerful and this afternoon the sun
on our backs it was no different i just had a long day and i
was tired and when i got to his house i felt surrounded none
of it was home to me and i felt out of place and jealous and
hurt by everything around me

the can opener the kitchen table that tape playing the bills
the half-empty bowl of chicken noodle soup on the counter
even offended me

so i wrote something and he has to understand me here it was
the first thing id written in ages and the demons of my
creative soul were released unleashed all the bad memories
and associations from when i used to write so long ago but
it was time for me to start again and so this afternoon at
the kitchen table i did

part fiction part fact part past part future
the now was nowhere to be seen

me and my purple pen we scribbled all we could about my soul
and how it was in serious danger endangered by lost spirits
floating around his home and i was growing more and more
afraid because that spirit (let me be honest here, only one
spirit was haunting me) was working to kill me as i gave
more and more of myself away graciously willingly happily

the more you give yourself away the more you bare your soul
to the world and thats a good thing to do its honest and
right

but one slip and you lose your soul and when you lose your
soul you can never recapture it

i felt her there this afternoon and the kitchen table
looking over my shoulder even at what i was writing she was
laughing she knew that i was right in what i was writing i
knew what was going on and she thought it was funny raping
my soul killing me overwhelming my existence with hers and
working to capture him so she could be so called happy again

maybe it was the dylan tape in the background and sentimental bobs songs that made me get a little melodramatic i know i did and thats where the miscommunication came in and me distracted from my letter i was writing to him by his eating a bowl of brown rice and raisins cold from the refrigerator and then another one of his roommates jokes and i think i lost my original idea in there somewhere

and instead of telling him my exact precise thought i told him instead about a fear i have its a fear instilled from the past and its the fear of having whatever you work for and show people taken away from you

no of course i dont mean i am afraid of him being taken away i mean my creativity and my right to express myself because a few years ago i once had something i really loved and it was ruined by someone else i loved by their reaction that is

when i write those fears come back its all psychological i dont want to go into it right now but id rather tell about how i ripped the page out of my notebook and surprised him by slapping it down on the tablecloth in front of him there was confusion and hurt in his eyes already as if he knew what was going to happen hed watched me marking the page so furiously in the past minutes
hell i wouldn't want that anger in front of me either

at the end of the letter i had written that i needed a nap and i did so i went upstairs to go to sleep then tripped back down the stairs from his attic room heart beating anxious against my ribs knowing that he was reading what i had written

instead of the attic i went to the back porch and look out over the yard the new green spring bright against the looming brilliant grey sky that grey sky that lights up everything else in sight because its going to rain and the earth cries out for it the colors are best then i enjoyed looking out at the world

there were two dogs fighting in the gravel lot next door one master screamed after his dog like he was a cheating boyfriend instead of a golden retriever then a bag man rolled down the alley with his squeaking creaking shopping cart then i sat down on the dusty mattress and tried to work on my story

just a few weeks ago on this porch he had ordered me to undress so he could see my naked body on the mattress he had used with her so many times before i had willingly complied then burst into tears when i realized that we would only be working on erasing his memories of her over and over and over he didnt care for me he cared about erasing her

the intensity of emotions flowing through the house accentuated my own senses i could bear all see all feel all it was too much to bear to close my eyes and cut out just one sense see no evil but couldnt stop the hear or feel and i just gave up and just stayed collapsed on the flower pattern dusty roses and thorns mattress

voices footsteps in the bathroom someone peeing if they looked out the window would they see me i should check for next time my hiding spot was quite divine i want to use it again soon my ragged emotions had me on the verge of useless tears i had no real problem so why push things around

i heard him run up the stairs to the attic then down to the phone room he had looked and i wasnt there if hed only opened the door to the porch there i was but he stayed in there and i listened to him dial and the clicks i counted the rhythm and he was dialing my number and he tried once waited silence then he hung up no answer then five minutes later he tried again then he left

i could see outside from there on the floor and the sky grew darker and darker grey and the green reflected off of each other a kind of power more vibrant that light energy my watch said sundown in half an hour so i decided to leave then in order to miss the inevitable rainstorm too

i checked he was nowhere in the house had he gone to band practice or to look for me where was he i hadnt wanted to talk five minutes ago when i had hidden like a frightened child but now i wanted him to know what he read but he was gone i went home on my teal bike and my book bag was heavy every pedal i took it banged my knees and the rain the rain started welcomingly cool on my face i was glad to leave his house and the tension and the uphill ride home paid off after the first pint of chocolate chocolate chip ice cream it was all forgotten i am easily pleased they say and they are right i am a simple creature after all despite all the knots i tie and leave behing for others to unravel

pleasant evening at home dylan tape and the rem and more rem this is pop psychotherapy at its finest and im reading some bukowski candles light my room a shrine and an altar to my power my power the cat confident shakes over my ankles live fur stole wear me 101 ways or your money back warm fur dim uneven light and some drunks sad tale of trying to master the unobtainable whore

the noise startles me
the house i thought was empty
i ignore it
then i dont i look out the window it is him he has thrown

the fading budweiser can in my side yard at my window i always knew that can stayed there for a reason it has just been fulfilled he looks so wide eyed i always say that i should just accept that fact that he has really wide clear eyes and when i look in them i can see what he thinks and feels he asks to come in and i say yes he has a key he lets himself in

upstairs in my stable territorial environment i know that the subject of the letter has been lost and if i wanted to discuss it i couldnt not in my room where my fortress protects me from the real outside world when i want it to

what i say goes

he sits on the futon and looks into my eyes this goes on and on the cat merges on to his lap and the look gets nowhere he tells me that what i gave him this afternoon to read disturbed him was that what he said i dont remember the words then because i blocked them out i blocked the punch because i felt it coming and i had to explain myself and him

i explain as clearly as i can that the letter was induced by the past when i write it takes me back to when i used to write and all my insecurities come out and i associated the wrong time with the wrong place and the wires were crossed and this whole thing between the two of us is different and he said some more and he says some more and he says some more and i say more on and on but it works in a direction and slowly things are making sense and i smile and he says something and calls me lady and i like it when he does that i touch his head fine fur i touch his face down his neck press my forehead to his we are settled

then i go downstairs to get some grapefruit juice and here i am all scared all over again and insecure and angry with myself for trusting another to cry about i wish i were patsy cline

Moon

Moon

She's a beauty
i could tell you
She's a brand new nickel
in the bottom of a beggar's cup —
but no one would toss her away.
i could tell you
She's the bottom of a tap-shoe
silver, clicking across the black stage —
but She's a too-shy young woman.
i could tell you
She's a beautiful ball bearing
or an easy greasy gear
with all her sisters
pinpricks uplit
rotating round her
mechanical dance —
yeah
that's close but.
i think She's a brilliant locket
clasped over the face of a lover
nightly She lulls me to marveling
She, my swinging paramour —
She, my dying heroine —



Untitled

Pen and ink
8" x 12"

my jesus

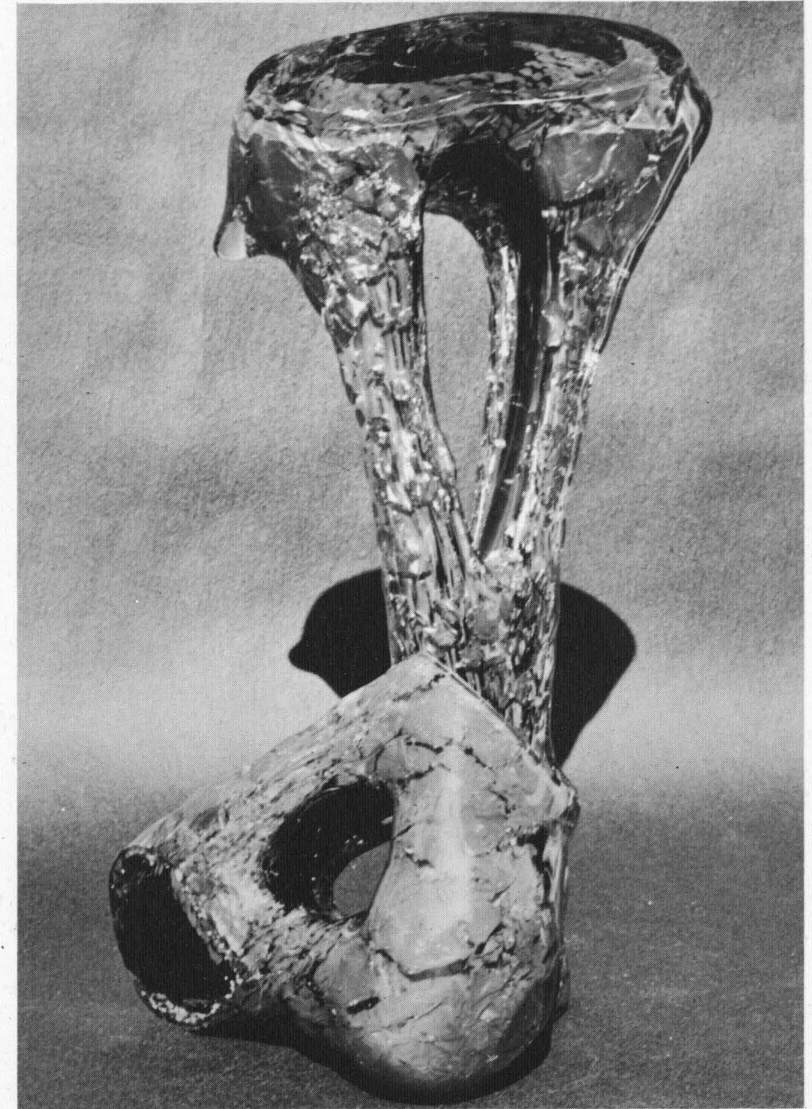
dandelion
mine
yellow-eye jesus
seed spreader
like a bread breaker

She bends

to the spider
green-glow jesus
plump kiwi-bodied
jumping god
with a watery waltz

She dances

for the fish that feed
mouthing out their tarnished joy
of scales and fins and flesh
dissolving, corroding
the clash and roll and bleed —
the burden of myth.



**Root of Insanity with
Exploding Copper Straitjacket**

Solid glass sculpture
20" x 7" x 6"

Vinegar

Brothers,
there's still a gallon
near the potatoes
near our mother
whose hands in the yellow bowl
have turned the salad
have turned our summers.

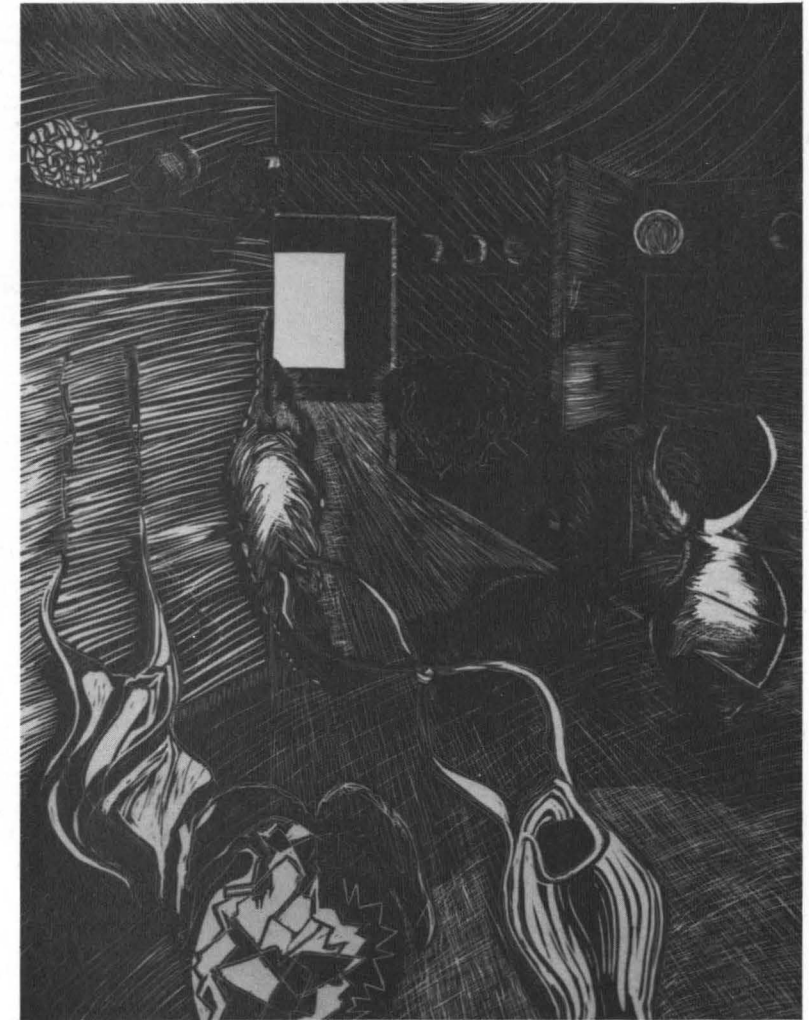


Flowers

Photograph
5" x 7"

Trespassing

The calloused widow
 thumbs through long forgotten
 now useless condoms
 in the lacquered dresser drawer
 The memory does nothing to her
 No crusty underwear, snotted handkerchiefs,
 to knead with soap and chapped knuckles
 The arthritis has gotten better
 But what does it matter?
 Missing from the TV screen
 is the woodworking channel
 from the coffee table—
 The farmer's almanac
 Out the window
 The wilting corn husks slouch
 among abandoned rows of wasted vegetables

**Evolution**

Lino cut
 30" x 48"

Pears

I clutched the pears in my hand: golden moons with just the faintest hint of russet blushing through their skins. I stood in line at the checkout counter, not bothering to look for the ever-roving six-items-or-less sign, as Frances was working and her line guaranteed an easy exit.

"How's it going," she said, first running my bag of pears across the scanner and frowning when it emitted a frightened squeal.

"Fine, thanks," I answered, but I was lying. Nothing was fine. Nothing would ever be fine again. I watched as she punched in the numbers and announced my total. I handed her a ten and walked toward the exit. The change suddenly seemed very unimportant. Frances would undoubtedly put it in an envelope and tuck it into the pocket of her navy polyester smock. Three weeks later, when I wandered in looking for toilet paper or English muffins, she would produce the envelope, a bit frayed but essentially intact, and inform me that she remembered these things. Of course she did, but I suspected if I mentioned Fran's kindness she would be rewarded with a red fabric rose to baste upon her smock.

"Mind if I stop by later?" she yelled. "I get off at noon." I shrugged. Frances and I did not know each other well, but we knew each other's secrets. That was enough.

I walked toward our house quickly. The trip was short — less than eight blocks, but I hated to leave Bryan alone. I could have taken the Volvo, but finding a parking spot on the narrow street when I returned would probably take up more time than the extra few minutes it took me to walk.

I unhooked the latch of our white picket

fence (it had been his fantasy — a link to the perfect world he'd read about in some long-forgotten childhood story) and closed it behind me. The dahlias were sadder this year, as if even they could somehow sense that bright colors belonged at the house next door, not here. I bent to feel the soil surrounding the petunias; it was dry. This was good — it had been raining off and on for weeks and too much water destroyed their roots. On a whim, I plucked one, felt the stem's stickiness on my fingers. I placed it in the sack with the pears. Bryan might enjoy seeing a bit of his coveted garden. His eyesight was going, but flowers still excited him, occasionally.

"Sweetheart," I hollered. I heard only a thud in response. This did not alarm me, as lately in his frustration Bryan had chosen not to speak unless it was absolutely necessary.

I washed my bounty in the kitchen. There was only a clear green bowl to put the pears in, as the dishwasher was still working its way through the breakfast dishes. I arranged the fruit, played with it. I drew one of the pears to my nose, brushed its smooth skin against my cheek, rough in comparison. I wanted to leave one behind, to hold one back for myself. But I could not deny Bryan their beauty. He had asked for five pears, and even though I suspected they would be abandoned after the first few bites, I dared not discourage his hunger. Even if it existed only in his mind.

I climbed the stairs slowly. The carpet was worn, needed replacing. We had talked once about tacking down an enormously long and narrow Oriental rug, something in teal and goldenrod. I wondered now if it would have made a difference. People in my support group talked about emotional well-being

as a method for keeping the T-cell count up. Positive visualization and stuff like that. Perhaps it worked. I didn't know. But I suspected Bryan's already disgruntled insurance company would be reluctant to pay for an Oriental runner. "REJECTED. NOT COVERED UNDER TERMS OF GROUP CONTRACT," the statement would read. "IF YOU WISH TO CONTEST THIS DECISION YOU MAY CALL THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS."

There was no point in contesting any of it, I decided, remembering a saying from the est training five years ago. What is, is. What ain't, ain't. Of course, they also told us we were machines. They just conveniently omitted the part about machines breaking down.

That was where Bryan and I met — at est. He was assisting at my training. "A blond haired blue-eyed Neo-Nazi," I described him to my roommate when we collapsed at the hotel room at the end of the day. "He stands up there with the trainer and I swear to God neither of them ever blink."

"So get off it, Tracy," replied Joanna, an accountant from Milwaukee. "He's an asshole. You're an asshole. You're letting him push your buttons."

"I am not," I argued, and stormed down the hall looking for a Coke machine. I was starving — we were only allowed one meal a day for the duration of the training and anything would have helped at this point. That was when I bumped into him — literally. Mr. Aryan Supremacy was jogging in the Holiday Inn corridors.

"Oh," he panted. "you're Tracy."

"Very good," I answered, "and I'm not even wearing my name tag."

"It's not required here," he said, wiping the sweat from his brow, "Just remember—"

"I know," I chorused. "No drugs, alcohol or other mood-altering substances. I've got it."

"Maybe," he replied, hopping up and down on one foot. "And it's easy to break our agreements." He tapped my shoulder and continued down the hallway.

"Prick," I whispered to myself.

Strangely enough, I didn't see him for the rest of my training. Not that I was looking, but somehow I wanted to prove to him that I'd made it through both weekends. I didn't have to. He called, one week later.

"Tracy? This is Bryan Green, from the network. We're having a seminar next month, and we'd really like to have you participate. So how would you like to pay for it?"

"But I haven't agreed to it yet."

"What's between you and doing the seminar, Tracy? Stop resisting."

I started pulling on the hole in my jeans. "I just don't —"

"Say nothing else," he said. "Seven o'clock, Thursday the eighth, the Hilton ballroom. I'll put it on your credit card — we've still got the number from your training."

"Oh, Christ," I said, and hung up. We were married six weeks later. "This is commitment," Bryan had beamed on that morning when we stood before the judge and pledged our eternal love.

"No, this is commitment," I said now, clutching the bowl of pears standing outside his bedroom door.

"Puddleduck," he smiled, grabbing the remote for the television and turning it off. "It's my little puddleduck." He reached to his head to smooth back his hair, then remembered there was nothing but a few colorless tufts.

"As in Jemimah?"

"I don't know," Bryan said. "I don't

remember. I just thought you wanted to be the puddleduck. And I will be the bunny."

"Flopsy, Mopsy, or Cottontail?" I asked, sitting next to him and unbuttoning his pajama top.

"The mean one."

"Are you feeling mean?" I pulled him up and removed his shirt. His skin was like wax paper: barely concealing his ribs.

He shook his head.

"I brought you the pears," I told him, getting up and going into the bathroom for a washcloth. I wet it, then quickly returned and eased it across his back.

He ignored me. He lifted his arms obediently as I bathed him.

"Hey, Werner was in this week's *People*," I said. "His second wife left him and now he's living on his yacht. And they don't call it the training anymore. Now it's the Forum, and they let you eat and pee whenever you want. They don't even call the participants assholes anymore. Isn't that weird?"

He shook his head no. "I don't like this kind," he said finally, lifting one of the pears. "It's too green."

"It isn't green, it's gold," I countered, too quickly. He pursed his lips and sulked. "Just try it."

"Remember when you used to read me the bunny stories when I was a little boy?"

"No, honey, that was your mom. When you were a little boy I was just a baby girl."

"Really?" he asked. Oh, God, the confusion again. My once sane and rational Bryan now seemed caught up in a Beatrix Potter storybook.

"Really," I said, "but if you want I could read to you now. Which one would you like to hear?" I opened the cedar chest at the foot of our bed and pulled out the worn volumes that I'd saved from childhood.

"No stories now, ducky. It's naptime," he whispered. "Then we can go to the mountains." He closed his eyes, shutting out me and the pears. I was used to this. I kissed his forehead, placed the bowl on his nightstand next to the folded washcloth and tiptoed from the room.

The mountains. We had never really been to the mountains. We had talked about Colorado when we first got married, but kept putting it off in favor of more est seminars. When Bryan first got sick, he took out all the old travel guides and pored over them daily, guiding his pencil over various routes.

"It's your fault," he told me.

"Okay," I answered. I saw no point in arguing. Bryan, more than anything, just needed to be right. After all, his life had just become horribly wrong.

"I'm going to die, you know."

"Everyone is going to die." What else could I say? If I tried to be comforting, I sounded phony. If I tried to be cool and self-assured, I ended up in the bathroom on my knees, getting rid of my rage and sorrow that way. There was no positive solution.

"But it's still your fault. You're responsible." His eyes had glimmered with resentment: nearly navy with anger. The dark circles were just starting to creep from the shadows. "I hate you for this," he said.

"I know." I wanted to tell him that I understood, but understanding did neither of us any good. Or so Werner said. Just getting the communication was important. "I got it," I replied dutifully.

"Great. And I know, being sick is only a level of my resistance. Whatever the hell that means." Bryan pushed his chair back from the table and stood up. Already his trousers looked too large. "But you're the one—"

"I know," I said, twisting my braid in my

fingers. "I resisted you, so you chose —"

"I chose chocolate," Bryan smirked. "And why did I choose chocolate?"

"You chose chocolate because you chose chocolate." It was a familiar line. Round and round the trainees went, exasperating the trainer, trying to explain why they chose chocolate. It tasted good. They hated vanilla. No, no, the trainer yelled. You've got it all wrong. Why did you choose chocolate? I chose strawberry, but the trainer did not call on me.

"I chose it because my wife wouldn't put out." I could still hear Bryan's voice saying that from the bathroom door. Then I heard the toilet flushing, again and again. "I wish it was you," he shouted. "You ruined everything."

"But you need me now, don't you Bryan?" I stared at my reflection in the bathroom mirror. Again, I had no answer. I washed my hands carefully, then went back downstairs to unload the dishwasher.

Steam rushed out, blinding me. I pressed my face downward, allowing myself this impromptu facial. My skin had been a mess lately — more obstinate than when I was sixteen. I scrutinized the end of my braid — split ends everywhere. And there was silver now, nestled between the brown strands that were so dark, people claimed they were black. My nails looked awful, too.

"You need help," I said, grimacing.

"You need a fairy godmother." Frances. I turned around; she was leaning on the kitchen counter.

"How long have you been here?"

She handed me a wad of ones and a few pennies. "The question is, how often do you go around sticking your head in the dishwasher? You look like shit."

"I know," I said, putting down a coffee

cup. "It hasn't been —"

"How is he?" she asked, pulling out a chair and lighting her cigarette simultaneously. "I mean, I haven't been to group lately, and now that Jeff is gone I'm just not sure if I can deal with it." She blew smoke out her nostrils and grinned. "Too close for comfort, you know?" Her hands were shaking.

"Look," I said finally, "would you mind not smoking? He's on oxygen."

She drowned the butt in the sink. "Sorry. I keep forgetting."

"How do you forget?"

"You don't," she sighed, scrunching her auburn curls into a knot. "You just fake it. And then eventually you can't take it anymore."

"Then what?"

She shrugged. "Guess that's why I'm here."

I reached across the table to clasp her hands. Her palms were rough, pink, and blistered. She tried to pull them away, but I could not let go. I wanted somehow to feel what she was feeling, experience it now so that when Bryan's time came, I would be ready.

"His mother called," she said. "And she wants to do his panel for the quilt. Something about his baby blanket, his prom picture, I don't know. But the point is, she's taking over. It's like, she won't even admit that I'm his wife. Was his wife. Whatever you say in cases like this. It really sucks, you know?"

I nodded. "So did you tell her you were already working on a panel?"

"I couldn't. I didn't want to hurt her feelings."

"What about your feelings? What would Jeff have wanted?"

"Jeff wouldn't have died," Frances gulped. One tear slid from her left eye and plopped onto the table. "That's what he would have wanted."

"Couldn't you work on a panel together?" I offered. "Maybe it would do you both good."

She laughed. "I'm not quite up to another memorial service, thank you. And anyway, she's in Minneapolis. You think I'd go to Minneapolis just to listen to her cry? Then she sits there going 'have you been tested, should I be tested, can the dog carry that stuff' and a million other questions until I'm ready to scream."

"Have you been?"

"Tested? Hell, yes, the minute he came home and laid it on me. I was down there like a shot. Want to know what my anonymous name was? Betty Boop. Betty Boop, your test results indicate that you do have antibodies to the AIDS virus. However, since your records indicated you have no symptoms, we recommend that you contact your personal physician so that he may closely monitor your situation."

"Jesus," I whispered, "I didn't know."

"Should have worn rubber gloves before, hunh?" She laughed again. It was cold, sort of a rasp in her throat. "Or doesn't it matter to you? Maybe you're another passenger on the doom train. Destination Hell." She walked to the dishwasher, took out a Mason jar, and filled it with water. "So tell me," she continued, "what about you?"

My stomach grumbled, so I grabbed a banana from the bowl on the table. I peeled it silently, broke off a bite and offered it to her. She shook her head. I put it in my mouth instead, pressing its softness against my teeth. She watched me chew.

"Fine," she said suddenly. "Don't tell me. Don't tell anyone. Just keep showing up

every third Thursday evening; poor little Mrs. Green, can't cope with the guilt, what a pity. Well fuck pity, Tracy. Fuck it all."

"I'm not looking for anybody's pity," I said. "Just some reassurance. We're all going through the same thing. Don't you think we have to help each other?"

"Screw help. Just tell me, do you have it? Don't worry — I'll keep your secret. After all, you've got one up on me. They'd can me at the market if they found out."

"I'm negative," I told her quietly. "My anonymous name was Anna Karenina. Sort of appropriate, right?"

"Like maybe you're going to throw yourself in front of a train?"

"Not exactly. I just — I had to have a name. They're so adamant about maintaining secrecy."

"Christ," she said. "Have you repeated the test?"

"Five times. All clean. Bryan and I hadn't slept together for about a year. And he knows his contact. He blames me."

"But he's the one who cheated on you. I'd be pissed —"

"What good is that?"

"Did you know that he was playing around?"

"No. But then again, I imagine most of us don't, do we? Did Jeff ever tell you?"

"I suspected," she said. "But he didn't tell me, and I didn't ask. What you don't know can't hurt you, right? Wrong."

"So what are your plans?"

"I'm not sure," she replied. "I'm just not—"

"Tracy!"

"That's Bryan," I said, out of the kitchen and halfway up the stairs.

He was lying flat on his back, staring up at the ceiling. "I ate it," he whispered.

"What, honey?" I sat down on the bed

beside him. The sheets were drenched.

He drew his hand from beneath the covers, revealing what could only have been the core of a pear. "It was exactly what I wanted, puddleduck." He closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them again. "If you really want something, you can have it."

"Create the space for it to happen in your life," I recited. I felt his thigh against mine, all soft and blue and bony. "I love you, you know?"

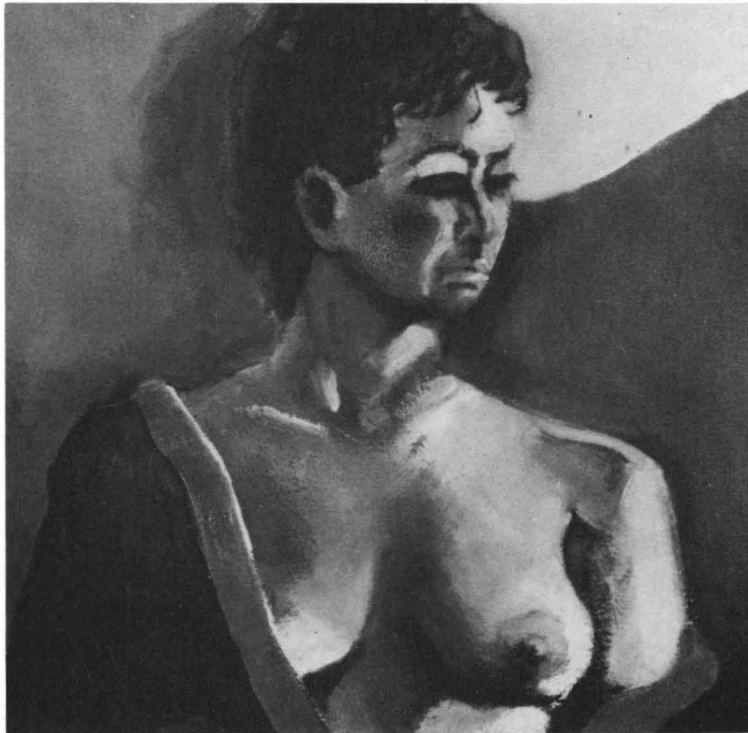
"Love means accepting somebody exactly as they are," he said, dropping the remains of the pear on the floor and lacing his fingers with mine.

"I got it," I said. My eyes felt like they'd been drilled with little slivers of ice.

His arm crept, stretching, trembling, until he reached the four pears in the bowl. Silently, he dropped one in my lap, turned his head toward the window. He pointed for a second, then blinked, trying to reassure himself.

"Stop resisting," I murmured, urging him on. The pear lay nestled between my thighs, protected. He stared at me again, then closed his eyes obediently. I listened to his breath, distant and shallow.

"What is, is," I reminded myself. The pear was warm, from the sunlight and the heat of my body. I rubbed it against my shirt, imagining its juicy sweetness running down my chin.



Untitled

Oil on canvas
12" x 12"

The Night Camp of the Sleeping Pintos

February 21, 1963, Abby's apartment.
Purcell in the background. Sixty or
So beer bottles abandoned, residing
As kitchen still life. The oak table,
Bare and smallish. We struck matches

To pass the time of empty winter. Made
Food jokes. One box of cornmeal. And
Of course, the pickles, but who cared?
We weren't empty it was understood.
When the pinto beans were found,

It meant more than just food. We cooked
Them unsoaked, all night. At two a.m.
They were laid to rest on the unlit table,
Turned in my hand one by one, as if each
Had died. There they slept awaiting their

Eulogy. Adorned with tiny, incense sticks.
The fires of their encampment burned
Like a biblical passage, unforgotten,
But wordless. Each ember glowed with its
Secrets, til I vowed never to eat even one.



Untitled

Oil and mixed media
60" x 60"

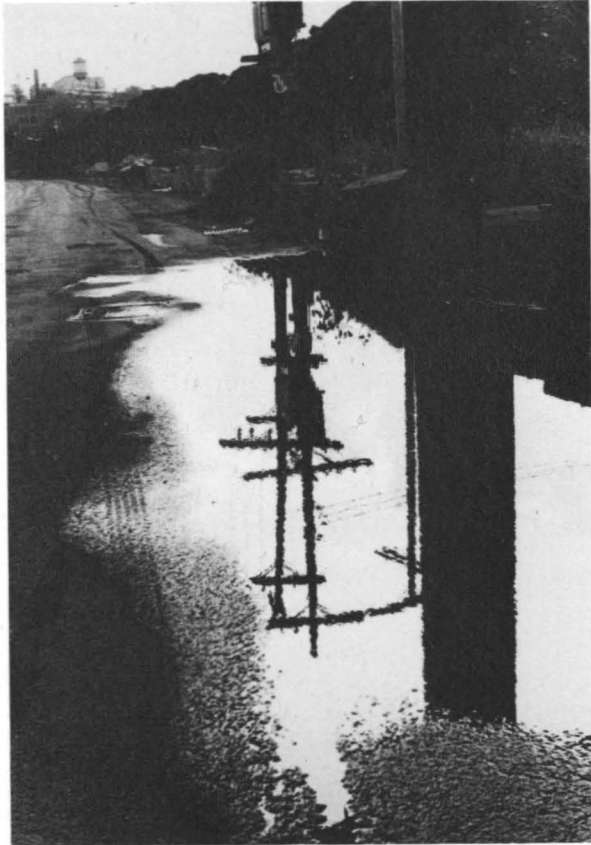
Second place, 1991 Mosaic Art Show

Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge

Each night she is drawn to the water's edge,
beckoned by the gentle hum of the river's depths.
Cold and hungry, it calls, reaching for her feet
as she stands ashore, silent, bent, and listening.

Here, she thinks, is pain,
in the water's black lullaby,
in the twisted steel bridge arcing across the sky...
And willingly she surrenders, staring blindly,
eyes as empty as the water lapping at her feet.

(Overhead, unseen stars explode across the heavens.)



Untitled

Photograph
10" x 14"

She

She is fierce and bright
 and has a razorblade smile
 It is she who walked the graveyards
 and chapels, her footsteps like bells
 She who dyed her hair a sooty shade
 to hide a heart that cared
 She who whispered the sighs of trees and chanted
 the streams plunging waterfalls
 She who invented the masturbating girl and found
 pleasure in the cruel hard bodies of men
 She who sat haggard and fraught in the airless
 dens of alcohol and praised the angst of
 the poets
 She who wandered the museums and galleries
 in the endless hunt for tender illumination
 She who inhaled the pungent aether of
 waterbongs and sang the lyrics of
 strumming gods in poppy mad mantra
 She whose clenched fists pounded on windows
 and crushed glass in her palms
 "Did you ever really love me at all?"
 She who cursed her curls and hips and
 lips and the boys who belittled her
 for their own desires
 She who 'tween pursed buds breathed soft
 desire into young men's ears never
 hesitating when hand touched breast
 She who called on telephone wires to mother far away
 and confessed her inadequacies and begged
 understanding

She who laughed with merriment at the hidden wit
 that comes with a life wrought with
 imperceptible moments of pain and only
 love's kind humor could share
 She who spoke with the life of children calling names
 and running in circles and chasing after their mates
 She who waltzed the Ivy halls of Scholars like
 a reluctant mistress so quickly the pariah
 Electra, Myrrha, scarlet and blind, looking through
 dead eyes and sucking on Turkish cigarettes
 She who wondered at the inequities of women
 who devoted themselves to Cinderella delusions
 and slept with men like painted dogs
 howling, howling long hours into the night
 She who drank beers of all nations and smiled at
 the Strange Ones; beautiful for their awkward
 desperate glances
 She who sat up all night and listened to the
 rain like piano keys ringing and stroked her cat's
 ebony fur
 She who stood in ivory towers contemplating
 love and the life of Sid Vicious
 and listened to Tangerine Dream
 so hallucinatory on Compact Disc
 She who wrote a poem of timed declaration
 about the voice of Beauty and
 a fragile sadness shared
 She who wrote a novel, blessed herself
 caressed herself and wept for a little girl
 who found pleasure in sea shells no more

She taught herself a song and it had no tune
 and it had no beat and it had no rhyme
 and it had no technique and it was not blasted
 from the rooftops from boom boxes nor thought of
 in the jazz clubs for it had but one word and
 she would sing it in her dreams and in the morning
 it would be gone

For then she heard the cacophony
 of the streets, the lights and horns
 and feet and radios and growls
 that polluted her head and stole
 the memory of her midnight wanderings

But
 the scented hopes hidden in the
 potpourri tissue paper of
 diaries and love letters

She hugged to her bosom
 like a suckling child
 as she made her way
 through the villainous city

For she was
 forever, the face of human desires
 and human disappointment
 And she wore flowered frocks in summer
 and her incensed hair like armor
 And her rich dubious virtue
 —a scimitar

In her quest
 for that chalice, that word,
 that Ultimate Cool.

Excerpt from The Left Behind

I feel as if the luggage I have packed today is alive and staring at me, trying to force me to acknowledge its presence. I cannot bear to look at it. It's 11 p.m., and my dorm at Ohio State opens tomorrow morning. I wonder if I will really be able to leave this place by then. Or ever.

I'm the last child to remain at home. Being the youngest and the only girl, I see now that I'm expected to stay around to clean the mess that my father and my brother, Christopher, have left behind. I have been left with Mother.

Poor, crazy Mother. Right this very moment I hear her pacing around in the hallway upstairs, swearing at the voices that torment her nearly all hours of the day. "Damn you. Get out of my house. Get out of my head. I curse you in the name of the Father." Sometimes she snaps her fingers and says, "Jehovah." She has a sheet of burlap wrapped around her shoulders that she calls sackcloth. Its unraveled strands are all over the house now like dust bunnies. Mother has no job, no interests, and no friends except for her cats, the strays she takes in and finds homes for.

Often, I look at old pictures of her to try and figure out when she first began to change. Mother had been beautiful once. In high school, her high cheekbones and square jaw gave her the appearance of a model. Now those features — along with her high forehead and the dark circles under her eyes — give her the appearance of a living skeleton.

The pictures of Mother stop after her graduation in '64. There are no pictures of her again for the next six years, until I was born. By then, she looked as she does now.

Perhaps she was already crazy.

I cannot say for sure. Until a year ago, I couldn't admit to myself that there was anything wrong with her. How in the hell was I to know what was normal? My earliest memory of Mother is walking with her, when I was about four, to the house of an old, bedridden woman who said she had a vision of heaven. On the way there, Mother softly spoke in tongues. It made me nervous even then.

"Mommy, what are you saying?"

She didn't answer. I tugged on her coat. "Mommy."

"I'm speaking in tongues, honey."

"What's that?"

"A kind of prayer."

"But what are you praying for?"

"I don't know. It's a secret only God knows. That way the devil can't get a hold of your prayers."

My father left us that same year. All that I remember about him is that he always wore a suede vest and had a deep, mellow voice that seemed like it ought to have belonged to a DJ spinning jazz records at night. He did a lot of odd jobs — construction work mostly — because he wasn't able to make money as a painter.

Mother was once a painter too. They met at the Columbus College of Art and Design. After a year there, they dropped out and got married. I have often suspected that, as art students they were right in the hub of the counter-culture. Perhaps drug use and that Sixties-styled search for God took its toll.

Only my father could tell me for sure what happened during those years, the missing years in the photo album. The last time I heard from him was a month after he left when he sent us a two hundred dollar check

in a letter post marked from Pittsburgh. Now we live off welfare checks. I wouldn't even be able to go to college if it weren't for the scholarship I'm getting from Battelle Labs, because they liked my District Science Fair project on how microwaves affect plant growth.

My brother, Christopher, moved out when he turned eighteen. Now he lives in Cleveland with some damn socialist girlfriend and plays drums for a punk band called Venereal Disease.

I'm all that this woman has left, and the truth is, I don't love her. She only inspires my pity and my fear. When she's like this, she scares the shit out of me, but, deep down, I know that she is not dangerous. After all, she is the cat woman.

I don't even know how many cats we have now. Maybe ten. The only cat that is really our own is Zoey, a cross-eyed, mute siamese who wandered to our house three years ago. Nobody is sure why she cannot speak, but there is a patch on her neck where the fur grows in dark, possibly marking where something attacked her. Zoey has never learned to trust us. She jumps whenever we talk too loud or make a sudden move.

Poke, an old, grey cat who's been staying with us for the last six months, is curled up on top of the television. He's blind in one eye from a cataract, and he has a strange infection that causes him to constantly sneeze a greenish-yellow mucous. This makes cleaning himself impossible, so his fur is shaggy and tangled from neglect. Lately, he has become a danger to himself, because whenever anything is cooking, he jumps right on top of the stove and crawls to the flame. He's singed himself twice now, but this hasn't stopped him.

I consider the cats to be Mother's pets.

I'm not very sentimental about animals. I could never own a cat or a dog. Cats are lazy freeloaders, and dogs — when they're not downright dangerous — are smelly, dumb, and helpless. The only pet of my own I ever had was a goldfish that I named Barbie. It died after a week.

I turn on the TV to see if there is anything on more mindless than the news. This awakens Poke. He jumps down and tries to rub against my leg, but I push him away with my foot. He must think this is some kind of caress, because he tries it again, so I push him harder. He hisses and walks away with a sneeze.

Mother must have heard this, because she is coming down. She has stopped talking aloud to her voices, because she knows it makes me nervous. Poke meets her at the bottom of the stairs, but she ignores him, because she doesn't like to touch him either.

"Are you okay, honey?" She sounds concerned. Perhaps she is trying to make me feel guilty about leaving.

"I suppose."

"You know you can come back any time you want to."

"Why don't you do something about that damn cat?"

Mother looks confused, maybe because I swore. "Poke?"

"Yeah. He's disgusting."

"He can't help being sick." Mother won't look at me. She's staring at her hands and moving her lips, paying more attention to her voices than me.

"But *you* can do something about it."

"I take care of him."

"He's been sick for six months." Mother is still staring at her hands. I can't even tell if she is really hearing me. "Can't you see it's out of your control? He needs help — a

doctor, something."

"Poke will be fine. I've been praying for him and he's been getting better. His fur's shinier and he doesn't sneeze as much."

I know it's useless to disagree, so I say, "He shouldn't be sneezing at all. He needs a vet."

"I can't afford to send him to a vet."

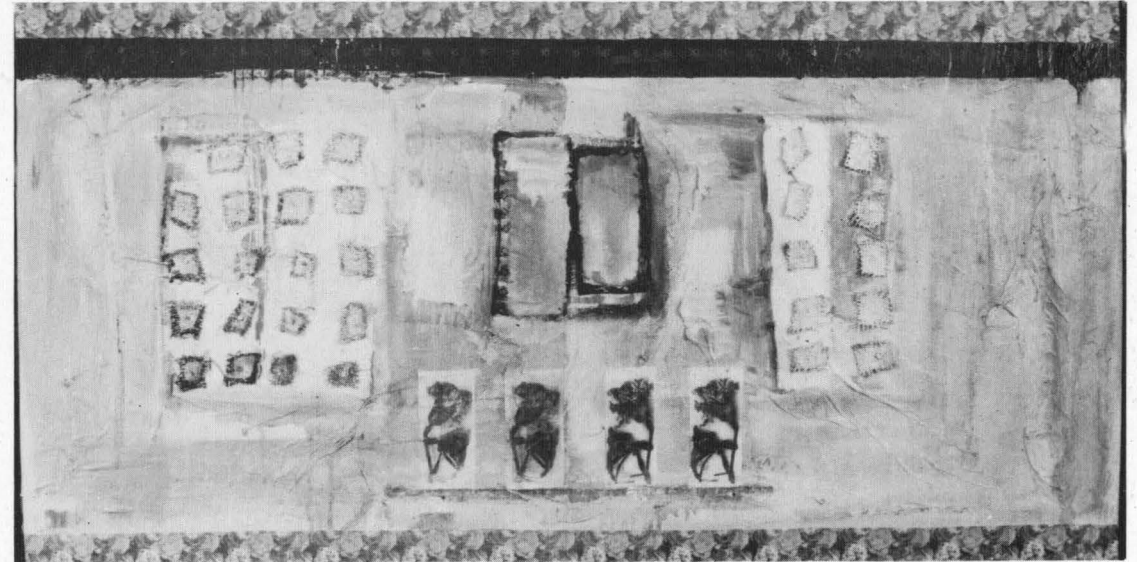
"Then maybe you should get rid of him."

"I'm not sending him to the humane society. They'd take one look at him and decide to put him to sleep."

"So what? I don't want him. You don't want him. Nobody wants him. I'm tired of all these damn sick cats. They're a pain in the ass to deal with. Let's do him a favor and put him to sleep."

Tears well up in Mother's eyes. "I can't believe you're saying this. Do you think he wants to die?"

"I think he doesn't even know he's alive now, and I'll put him out of his misery myself if I have to." I run past Mother, up the stairs, and lock myself in the bathroom. Trembling, I look in the mirror and wonder if it's really me in the reflection.



Untitled

Mixed media/collage
18" x 36"

The Wait

All your life you have waited for him,
You wait for him like people wait
for rain in summer. Your porch
steps sag and open themselves
in readiness.

The August heat drapes your body
like a shroud. Insects die in the air
and vanish, their corpses
falling unnoticed to the ground.
Somewhere, a glimmer
in your consciousness alerts you
that what you wait for is not coming,
then fizzles out. Your eyes
are dull and dark.

Your dreams are dying on the vine,
fruit so overripe and sweet
consumption is impossible. You
must let them rot and drop.
Soon the snow will cover
what you have hoped for.

And although he is not here,
you will die waiting for him,
your neck against the arm of this rusty
sliding-rocker stuck in its traces, your
legs parted. They will bury you
with your eyes open,
and your hands reaching out.

The Alleged Nymphomaniac's Response to Her Critics

Sometimes it is not sex I want:
sometimes just his bare skin
against mine is enough. Or the way
his hair brushes across my shoulder,
like a kiss on the inside of my wrist.
I love the sweat that forms between
my fingers when we hold hands,
part mine, part his — and how he will
lick it off later when he sucks
them, finishing by touching each
of my palms to his lips. Nothing
is more pleasing than watching the slow
shiver from his belly to his chin
when I bite his neck or earlobe,
or run my nails over his hipbones
and up and down his spine. The feel
of his body wrapped around me, his knees
fitted into mine, is the greatest peace
I've found. Sometimes it is not sex
I want. Sometimes the weight of his hand
resting on a certain part of my stomach
gives me a perfect satisfaction.



The Poetry Garden

Pen and ink
12" x 18"

Waiting for laurel

Cautious, I take pieces of you
I gathered over the years of secrets & dreams & fears
put them together, arrange them around myself,
slip your antiqued paisley shirts over my head
and pull on the tapestry coat you left behind for me
to battle the cold stillness of your death.

I have, surprisingly, survived the toxic nightmare
of seeing you strapped into a hospital bed, shit
between your toes, your brain full of cancer by morphine
hallucinations of pigs escaping from your pillow.
Your responses to my questions irrationally bobbed up
like the triangle in a magic 8-ball.

Now you apologetically come to me in my dreams,
your hair grown back, tangled with my own.
All day I anxiously wait to find you there, alive again
in my slumbers, so I can hear your voice and
curl my body around yours
in the comfort of sleep.



Being

Oil on canvas
48" x 48"

She Lets the Owls In

i see a figure
 who is just a pencil sketch
 with arms raised high
 like arches that hold up all the world
 but she is only
 the outline of a form
 though i believe she will finish
 her own sketch
 by her own self
 one of these days
 most likely when i least expect it
 when i am dreaming, in a sleep
 and
 she will open all the windows
 let loose the drapery to the wind
 she will let the owls in
 who have been "hooting" all this time
 and
 while walking around
 in the trance that is her being
 cities will form from the dust
 in the corners
 and make a skyline
 highlighted by myself
 in the form of a grand oculus
 -minus the dome
 through which comes
 all things that are in the sun.

Honorable mention, Albert J. Kuhn Award for Excellence in Poetry

White Cancer

<<The most beautiful sight in orbit is a urine dump at sunset.>>
 –ALAN SHEPARD, 1st Apollo Mission

<<A terrible beauty is born.>> –YEATS, "Easter 1916"

A smokestack ejaculates milk and honey—
 enough to feed the world forever—
 into the fertile belly of the night sky.
 Lush, rushing rivers of chemical jism
 channel down a snowy slope:
 artificial vanilla icing
 in long, narrow grooves.
 The bloodied head of atomic dawn
 rises between the mountain's bent legs
 and thaws the frigid kneecap peaks
 with a gorgeous rose glow.
 A billowing mushroom of white heat
 enlightens the firmament,
 expelling all dingy, lint clouds
 of an ignorant pre-nuclear age.
 Golden horns of morning announce,
 with ear-searing hosannas
 of rockets and air-raid sirens,
 the rape of virgin nature
 by the holy spirit of industry.
 Hark the screams of the newborn mutant,
 progeny of metal and electricity,
 hybrid of muscle and mind.
 The Second Creation has come,
 and we are angels of the Lord.

Ever since Adam first shat in the Euphrates,
 giggling like an infant
 as the warm, wombish water
 lapped against his scrotum,
 mimicking the emaciated faces of fish
 that choked on his drowning feces.....

As apes, we wiped calloused rumps
 on happy, little banana peels—
 we had not evolved to sadism.
 But now, I, survivor of the Second Creation,
 rip out one of my ribs
 for a Pygmalion chisel,
 and soon you stand before me
 nude and naiEve.
 Me Tarzan, you Jane, and there's Gauguin
 painting us a naked colour,
 and Rousseau and Thoreau
 in a cabin of <<clay and wattles,>>
 and Nietzsche the Serpent coiled
 around the Tree Beyond Good and Evil,
 eating his eternally recurring tail.
 Don't let him tempt us, my love,
 with styrofoam McDonalds' boxes
 growing on that vine,
 with telephones and televisions
 nesting in that bough,
 with terraplanes and æroplanes
 built from that cross;
 don't let him feed us that fruit,
 don't let him feed us that oldest lie:
 <<Ye shall be as Gods.>>

So you drive to the environmental rally
 in your 'indispensable' pollute-o-mobile
 WHITE CANCER

So you dine at the vegetarian café
 while smoking your bohemian cigarette
 WHITE CANCER

Or you swear that you only hunt for sport
 as you fling back fish with pierced mouths
 WHITE CANCER

Or you campaign against vivisection,
 then pay them to suction out your foetus
 WHITE CANCER

A smokestack ejaculates milk and honey
Feasts for the Never Full
 Lush, rushing rivers of chemical jism
Orgies of the Dead
 artificial vanilla icing
Feasts for the Never Full
 The bloodied head of atomic dawn
Orgies of the Dead
 A sautéed mushroom cloud
Feasts for the Never Full
 the rape of virgin nature
Orgies of the Dead

The warm, wombish water
 lapped against his scrotum
Orgies of the Dead
 The emaciated faces of fishes
 choked on his drowning feces
Feasts for the Never Full
 Nietzsche the Phallic Serpent
 erect on the Phallic Tree
Orgies of the Dead
 eating his eternally recurring tail
 from styrofoam McDonalds' Boxes
Feasts for the Never Full
 Terraplanes and æroplanes
 spawned for the Phallic Cross
Orgies of the Dead
 Don't let him feed us that fruit,
 don't let him feed us that oldest lie
Feasts for the Never Full



Fishin'

Oil on canvas
 16" x 30"



The Conversion of St. Paul

Oil on canvas
16" x 30"

Somnus

Before sleep, a fear of eternity
with more sleep and boring serenity.
Another sixteen hour shift of treadmill shivers finished.
Reflections off the steel plate in my mind.
Further thoughts on the accomplished goals and
the hellbent failures.
Unaccountable actions—fluid motions which stutter in echo.

Dawn. Give me strength.
Days. Cordless follies and lengths of time.
Night. Hours gone, years.

Eventual fears--regrets whisper in the ear.
Wanderings. Little shocks jerk my attempted perfection.
It startles me, the wavering fun house vision—
This groveling fatigue and vomiting hunger.
But nightmares canter for daylight.

Avoidance of the stole-kissing and cross-bearing.
Kneeling for the true last rights.

He hums Leucosia's hymn,
smiling a mouthful of flashcube teeth,
panting tear gas breath and
offering candy canes dipped in oil.
"Here my child. Hear my whisper."

A scythe-tap to my bowed head
And I am welcomed.

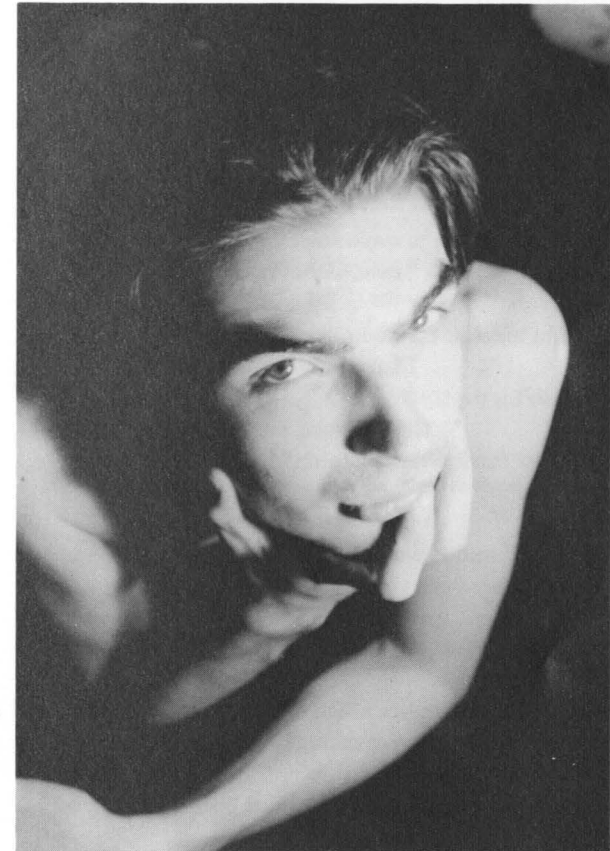
Woman in the Attic

She was twenty-five
she inhaled the attic dust
before her father strangeld her.
Embedded in the brick
of your old house
she rests peacefully
until you sleep.

She becomes
the night for you—
her lilac perfume
drifts past
the wavering sheer curtains
at dusk then
she cups your
innocent face to gently
close your eyelids.

The ghost within
your mind has
trapped you
with her silken blonde hair
that shines like cobwebs,
or her black satin dress
that resembles a shadow.
Every dream is a
nocturnal embrace
under a blanket of ivy.

And even when you awake,
she sits in a frame
at the foot of your bed.
You begin each morning
with the ritual
of opening an old cedar box
to smell old roses and
to touch a lock of her hair.
For years, she has been with you.
But now you are leaving—
will she let you?



Untitled

Photograph
9" x 12"

(the poet in his true flesh)

Ever get out of the bathtub and just look at yourself
 naked
 (it's scary)
 I took a good look at myself
 I didn't really like what I saw
 but I didn't mind it either

Ever notice how you always suck your belly in
 even if you're not intentionally
 trying
 I ran around the room trying to trick myself
 I turned and caught a quick glimpse
 it wasn't a pretty sight
 then I stuck my belly out to see
 just how far it would stretch
 I T W A S B I G
 -but then i sucked it all in-
 and it was much better

Ever play with your navel
 then look to see if anybody's watching
 and tactfully smell your finger

(Gross!!)
 why do we humans always have to be so goddamned curious
 about everything?
 Suspiciously analyzing everything
 that's it, pick that piece of lint out of your pubic
 hair

(Housekeeping)

Go ahead, flex your muscles
 grit your teeth
 shake that groove thing
 nobody's watching

that's the reason for doors on bathrooms
 imagine what a crazy world this would be
 if we all had to walk around in the
) nude (
 nobody would know how to take it
 I'd really like to try it sometime
 but I doubt if you'd like that very
 much

of course,
 that never stopped me before

Jeff Angles

Jeff is in his second year at OSU with senior standing as a Japanese and International Studies major. He says he writes with no plan in mind. He usually writes fiction but submitted poetry because it felt right. Jeff's ultimate goal is to write poetry in Japanese.

Pamela Brown

Pamela describes her writing as "naked," and her works in this year's *Mosaic* share a common thread: someone in her life a long time ago, and the pain involved that cleansed her. Previously published in the *OSU Alumni Magazine*, she's currently working on children's books. A self-professed Disney junkie, she also has a fascination for goats.

Jack Butler

Jack is a sophomore who says that he tries to write about things that stick in people's memory — things that are remembered but never noticed at the time. He describes his writing as "surrealistic, demented, and colorful."

Jennifer Campbell

A freshman English major, Jennifer describes her writing as personal and thought-provoking. She says that she writes about everyday things that bother her.

Andrew Dickson

Although he hasn't been published before, Andrew is interested in novel writing. A third year English student, he describes himself as thinking too much, and writing everything down. He considers his writing "not very predictable."

Felicia Graham

"The Woman In The Attic" comes from a true

story of an old house where a father had buried his daughter in a chimney. Felicia currently works as a copywriter for an ad agency, and considers her ads works of art. A Miss Ohio contestant, she describes her writing as "impulsive, sensual, and neurotic."

Annette Haddad

Annette is a graduating senior in electrical engineering. She hopes one day to be able to present poetry to the deaf through sign language. "These cans are 59¢. The regular price is vanity," Haddad says captures the essence of her work.

Charity Henderson

Charity describes her writing as "good clean fun," and her future plans include falling in the Pacific Ocean soon, probably around September. How is this wildly sensually excessive senior in English different? "You guys should know that by now."

Richard Hurley

Richard describes his writing as "honest, unstructured, and simple." His poem in this year's magazine, "(the poet in his true flesh)," is based on actual experiences. He considers his ability to get along with different people his unique strength.

Keith A. Mitchell

The poem "Somnus" (the Roman god of sleep, brother of Mars, god of death) equates one day to a lifetime, where falling asleep becomes death itself. A junior majoring in English and Psychology, he has plans for graduate school. An ex-flower child/high school calculus teacher once told him, "Everything always works out, one way or another." He now realizes how wise she really was.

Brian Moran

"Vinegar" is one of Brian's many pictures of summer, initiated by a dream. His goals include publishing one good book of solid poetry with a substantial voice, and describes his writing as "Lyrical, visual, and incoherent (at times)." Brian dislikes automobiles.

Lee Moran

"Night Camp of the Sleeping Pintos" is based on a true story, one of those experiences Lee hasn't heard about elsewhere. She describes her writing as having "incorrigible curiosity for thought-provoking sensations."

Chris Morgan

"She Lets the Owls In" was written all at once between classes when Chris was a first quarter freshman. A junior in Art (painting), he strives to be a successful artist. In the words of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, he hopes to "not mistake anything for what it may not be."

E. Christian Moore

Ed describes his writing as "changing, honest, and visceral." Although this is his first time being published, he also does freelance writing and screenwriting. At 6'4", he feels he's always seeing things from a different point of view.

Mark Pavkov

A senior English major, Mark is in the process of applying to MFA programs in creative writing and poetry. Mark says that he writes from experience. He is influenced by poets Charles Cimic and Anne Sexton.

Robert Pierson

A freshman in Classics, Robert says that

both "The Good Life" and "White Cancer" attempt a social commentary in a satiric vein. His "very ambitious goal" is to publish a volume of verse. Robert describes himself as "artistic, consecrated, and a little loony."

Joanna Schaub

A junior English major who "thinks too much," Joanna has never published before, but is looking for more opportunities. Her works include "My Jesus," a commentary on religion, and "Moon," a frequent image in her writing.

Ame Shunck

Ame is a senior English major who writes to "eliminate shit" from her life. Ame plans on getting a master in Library Science. She describes her writing as "dismal, vague, and real."

Nathan Weaver

Nathan describes himself as a nice, nebular, necrophiliac English major who actually likes cats. He plans on being in school for life as an excuse for being poor. Nathan considers himself different because he's only seen Smurfs on television.

Amy Applebaum

Amy was born in 1953. She would like to "let the work speak for itself."

Joseph B. Briggs

Drive-in movies are an influence from Joe's childhood. His philosophy is, "when you lose your day planner and don't care you truly become one with yourself."

Lisa Doreain

"I was born in 1968, in a pretty village. My first words were 'mama' and 'sheep.' Later I moved to this country and lived in Pittsburgh."

Suzanne Gainer

Suzanne takes photography classes while in continuing education.

Michael Gallagher

Michael is a senior interested in movement and performance art.

Matt Markling

"I use photography as a way for me to escape this fast-paced world in which we live," says Matt, a sophomore double majoring in political science and economics.

Lisa Miller

Lisa says of her work, "My father taught me that photography is an extension of my eyes. It is the means by which I can share the beauty and honesty of the things I see. It may not always be beautiful, but it is the truth."

Alan Mowrey

"It all started when I was a small child..."

Paul Pope

A drawing-painting-print major, Paul publishes stripwork with a small printing house in Texas. "The cartoon strip is an underutilized art form," he says. "In my lifetime, I hope to further promote the cartoon strip."

Diane Ramage

Diane is a junior in arts and sciences.

Jeff Regensburger

"In my work I try to combine visual elements in such a manner that they will eventually land me a date."

Elsie Sanchez

"Painting is an experience and a discovery. It is a means of transforming my mental process onto a canvas, incorporating the ugly and the beautiful; accidents and intentions."

Anne Spurgeon

Anne is a painting/drawing major.

Mark Spurgeon

A recent graduate, Mark once wandered into Hopkins Hall, feigning the painting on p. 2.

Kim Stout

From the notes of Agnes Martin, Kim quotes, "a work of art...is a very small gesture of exultation." She also remembers B. Eliot saying, "what is needed of art is simplification of life into something rich and strange."

Robert Strati

"I'm not bleak," maintains Robert.

Ferdinand Thieriot

Influenced by nature and fantasy, Ferdi-

nand says, "In working in different mediums, I find a clearer understanding of my inner self, my identity, which in turn enhances my experiences in life."

Jennifer Tough

"It is important that my work be cynical, evasive and minimal."

Shanna Weber

Shanna is a senior in arts and sciences who is interested in, among other things, pen and ink drawing.

Linda Wolfe

Linda is a recent graduate in painting, drawing, and printmaking.

Friends of *Mosaic*

This year marks the beginning of "Friends of *Mosaic*," a new program created by the editorial staff for students, faculty, and friends to express support of the magazine. Although different categories denote different levels of financial gifts, their gesture of support is what really counts. These individuals, couples, and organizations have given funds to support the magazine, to increase circulation and help fund the many events that *Mosaic* sponsors on campus. Their gifts have made a direct impact on the outcome of this year's magazine, and in a broader sense, the entire university.

The entire editorial staff would like to express sincere thanks to our "Friends of *Mosaic*":

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The editorial staff of *Mosaic* encourages submissions from all undergraduates at The Ohio State University.

Literature submissions, including poetry and short fiction, must be typed and should not contain any personal information (name, address) on each piece. Literature submissions will not be returned. Original works of art are accepted, as well as slide or photographic reproductions of works that are not transportable or of high value. All original artworks will be returned.

All submissions must include a title sheet listing title of piece(s), name, address, and telephone number. Limit five submissions in art or literature.

Send submissions to:

Mosaic Magazine
University Honors Center
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Deadline for submissions traditionally falls in mid-February, but is subject to change at the discretion of the editorial board.

